

LOADSTAR LETTER

"The Biggest, The Best" • Since 1984 • Number 6 • January 1994

CMD Unveils 1351 Mouse Clone

Those guys at Creative Micro Designs have done it again. Recently a 1351 Mouse crunch left new GEOS users without the preferred means of navigating the system. Up until now CMD has been importing real "free-moving" mice from Europe for their customers rather than sell them joystick emulating mice. Not satisfied with relying on imports, the technical wizards at CMD sat down and designed a new all-American mouse for GEOS and other mouse users.

The new mouse will have a three-button configuration. The middle button will be an automatic "double click". CMD hopes to have the Mouse available for retail sale by the time you read this.

When asked about all the mouse activity, Doug Cotton, of CMD replied, "We manufacture and distribute GEOS, and we have to support it. We do that in our floppy drives, our hard drives, RAMLink, and now our mice. We believe in support."

In the works, CMD has a new trackball on the horizon, with full mouse movement, not joystick emulation. □

Apple Clashes with Texas County Over Homosexual Benefits

Negotiations broke down between Apple Computer and Williamson County when they found out about Apple's policy of granting the same health benefits to gay and lesbian employees with same-sex spouses that it does to heterosexual spouses. Williamson County called this "wrong" and has refused to give Apple a \$750,000 tax incentive to build a new plant in the county. At least 1000 local jobs and a \$20,000,000 boost would go to some other county. Pressure was piled on by Governor Ann Richards and local officials who felt that jobs was the issue, not the liberal policies of one company or the conservative policies of another. The council reversed itself.

Charlie Culpepper, mayor of the Round Rock, said that he didn't agree with same-sex marriages or government micromanaging business. Families need jobs. A local Methodist Minister agreed that while he didn't agree with the policy, the government should have no say in the matter. □

Loadstar Approaches 10th Year

The milestone approacheth. LOADSTAR's tenth anniversary will be a significant event in personal computing history. Only SOFTDISK, the Apple magazine on disk, also published by Softdisk Publishing, has endured longer. Thousands of computer companies and hundreds of magazines have come and gone, many for the C-64. LOADSTAR is the only magazine that's been there all the way, and we hope to see the new century. All you have to do is keep subscribing, and we will.

Stay tuned, and subscribed, for our gala 120th issue in May 1994. We don't know how we plan to celebrate, but we promise it will be special. □

Loadstar Receives Numerous Reports Of Mail Fraud

LOADSTAR has received letter after letter in the past month, detailing incomplete transactions with only a couple of Commodore companies thought to be reputable, even by us. A victim reported to LOADSTAR that he had first called the *Better Business Bureau*, and they reported there were no complaints against the company. The subscriber then wrote a check to the company, received no product, and was flatly refused a refund. Credit for another purchase can always be refused by the purchaser. Vendor policy is not law. Customers who have ordered a product and have received nothing after complaints to the vendor, should report the vendor to the postmaster. The Postal Service can and *will* handle it. LOADSTAR can't, and the Postal Service will do it for free with no legal expense to the victim. But victims *must* report.

The *Better Business Bureau* says they won't have any complaints on file as long as victims don't supply them in writing. Phoning the local *Better Business Bureau* may cause the vendor's local *BBB* to contact the vendor and urge them to ship merchandise, but what really helps is a *written* complaint to the *BBB*.

The *BBB* supplied LOADSTAR with the address of a consumer advocate group that may help with troublesome mail order vendors:

Mail Order Action Line
6 East 43rd St
New York, New York 10017 □

CMD Launches 8-bit Magazine

This is no rumor. *Creative Micro Designs*, in Longmeadow, MA, will start a new Commodore publication in early 1994. When asked why by LOADSTAR's Longmeadow correspondent, CMD responded that they were doing their part to keep the market alive.

Tentatively called *CMD NEWS*, the magazine will give revived venue for advertising as well as news, reviews, and columns from industry movers and shakers such as LOADSTAR, FGM and others. □

Bad Batch of EPROMs Slow Super Snapshot Shipments

According to *Software Support International* technical support in Vancouver, Washington, *LMS Technologies* was ready to manufacture another batch of *SUPER SNAPSHOT* cartridges, but the 64K EPROMs (Erasable Programmable Memory) purchased proved to be defective. *LMS* has rectified the problem, and *SUPER SNAPSHOT* should be flowing into the homes of Commodore users by the time this newsletter is published.

There have been rumors floating on the *Internet* in *comp.sys.cbm* that *LMS Technologies* is farming out applications

from programmers for a *SUPER SNAPSHOT V6*. At least for now, this rumor is untrue according to *Software Support International*, who claims that they would know of it before *Internet*, being the sole distributor. □

LOADSTAR Ships 3.5 Inch Disks!

LOADSTAR #116 shipped on 3.5-inch disks to everyone who voted for 3.5 inch disks over the past half year. Any reader who would prefer 3.5-inch versions of *LOADSTAR* is asked to call or write and request a change in subscription type.

Softdisk's magnificent non-commodore database is still having trouble adapting to the added fields for the *LOADSTAR* magazines. Bear with us and pardon our dust as we expand. □

Compton's Demands Anger Multimedia Developers

Compton's, who brought us the first electronic encyclopedia in 1989, received patent #5,241,671 on "multimedia" programs on August 31, 1993. The patent is titled "Multimedia Search System Using A Plurality Of Entry Path Means Which Indicate Inter-relatedness Of Information." Compton's insists that now any software company publishing "multimedia" software, under threat of legal action, must pay a licensing fee. They are asking for a "modest" 1% licensing fee from all companies producing "multimedia" software increasing to 4% for those who don't respond by June 30, 1994.

Reaction from software developers has been nothing short of caustic, and with good reason. AT&T, MCI, and other huge tele-communication companies are setting up huge ultra-fast communication data highways that will be graphical, contain databases, and be subject to Compton's patent. Not only that, the very nature of software is headed toward the graphical, digitized intuitive data retrieval system.

"This is the most arrogant move I've ever seen..." said one developer. Many companies are coming forth demanding that the patent be lifted because they had been using similar technology prior to Compton's. One such company is The Library Corporation, which claims to have been using "multimedia" in 1984. Though Compton's description of "multimedia" is very technical, many fear that any software product with digitized graphics, digitized sound and any kind of information information database could

be considered Compton's brand of "multimedia" by ill-informed judges and juries. Many would argue that CD games, with digitized graphics and animation are "multimedia" and thus in debt to Compton's.

Compton's New Media claims that the patent "isn't dependent on the delivery method for multimedia." So actual algorithms and computers don't matter. They claim that not only software, but interactive television and graphical online services are subject to this patent.

The Interactive Multimedia Association (IMA) is comprised of over 250 organizations with very deep pockets says that it will support legal efforts to overturn the patent. The group says that it's more concerned with the issue of what it calls "broad, non-technical multimedia patents" by the United States Patent Office. "The Patent Office is issuing extremely sweeping patents that are for basic computer and multimedia processes that have been used for many years which are obvious and not novel," says Phillip Dodds, IMA director. □

Teenager Jailed For Computer Death Threat

12/16/93 HOUSTON, TEXAS, U.S.A., 1993 DEC 16 (NB) -- A Houston, Texas teen, already on probation for trying to hire someone to kill a romantic rival, has been given a 30-day jail term for sending death threats via a computer bulletin board.

In addition to the 30 day jail term, State District Judge Dennis Collins also ordered Shawn Kevin Quinn to spend three months in the county's boot camp for young offenders. Boot camps include a regimen of physical training and strict discipline.

Quinn got into trouble with the law when he found himself in an online discussion on a computer bulletin board about his probation. The party Quinn was discussing his situation with online reportedly told the teen he is "a whiny complainer who probably belonged in jail."

Quinn, apparently incensed by the unidentified critic, responded, "I deserve freedom, criminal conviction or not." He called the person's comments "stupid" and "rude" and said he would "probably think about getting a gun or other lethal weapon, Brady bill or not, and you can guess the rest. The moment I escaped or got paroled, guess what I'd do?"

Quinn was placed on 10 years probation in August of this year after pleading no-contest to charges that he gave seven Atari computer games and \$5.30 to a district attorney's undercover

investigator to assassinate a fellow high school student. The target was another boy who was favored by a girl Quinn was reportedly enamored of. □ (Jim Mallory/19931215)

New Texas Instruments Chip Called Revolutionary

12/09/93 DALLAS, TEXAS, 1993 DEC 9 (NB) -- Texas Instruments researchers have demonstrated a "revolutionary" new computer chip that the company says operates over three times faster, holds three times more functions than present chips, and operates at room temperature.

The chip, which could be the key to development of future generations of computers, operates on the principle of quantum mechanics, a principle that says electronics will behave as a wave and pass through classically impenetrable barriers under certain conditions.

The theory was once considered just a laboratory novelty, but TI researchers say they have demonstrated the quantum effect chip at room temperature. Prior to the TI development, devices based on quantum effects were limited to operating at minus 320 degrees Fahrenheit, conditions too cold for practical applications such as desktop and portable computers.

Gary Frazier, nanoelectronics manager at TI, called the demonstration "a significant breakthrough" and said the new devices can now be designed into commercial systems without the need for special cooling. TI says its scientists developed the new chip using a technique called "resonant tunneling transistors." The chip consists of 17 transistors which replace as many as 40 conventional transistors for the same type circuit on a conventional chip.

TI says replacing conventional transistors with resonant tunneling transistors would mean a significant leap in the number of functions that could be performed by a single chip. Resonant tunneling circuits perform an equivalent function with fewer transistors than are currently used.

"This opens up the possibility for smaller computers that operate faster than computers using today's technology," according to Frazier. He said practical applications of quantum devices are five to six years away. Applications include: microwave, X-band analog-to-digital converter chips for military applications; improved performance of digital cellular telephones; top of the line computers and faster workstations; and high-bandwidth digital video processing in high-resolution and high-definition television

(HDTV).

TI says farther down the road, extremely sophisticated quantum effect ICs could turn today's computer dreams into reality, predicting it might be possible to create a computer system that can think, see, and speak as a human being does by putting all the circuitry of a supercomputer on a single chip.

TI says its scientists have been working on quantum effect devices since 1982. The work is funded in part by contracts from the Air Force Wright Laboratories, the Advanced Research Projects Agency, and the Office of Naval Research. □

(Jim Mallory/19931209/Press Contact: Sheree Fitzpatrick, Texas Instruments, 214-995-2984)

Review: The Sharp JX-9400 Affordable Laser Printer

Ah, the fresh smell of ozone in my own home! The first time I considered purchasing a laser printer was almost eight years ago, when a laser printer for under \$1000 was a steal. Now that I edit a newsletter, I have a need. I needed laser perfect output, and the inherent convenience of these types of printers. When I saw the *Sharp JX-9400* advertised in a *J&R Music World* catalog for \$489, I agonized over the purchase for weeks. It listed, among other low cost lasers, for \$489.

J&R killed five trees to let me know that the added packing material shipped with my printer was environmentally correct. Of course the 4 tons of custom styrofoam supplied by *SHARP* don't count.

The setup was rather harrowing. If I see more than one "If you do this step wrong, you'll ruin your device" sticker, I panic. I take warnings seriously because I don't want to have my new equipment repaired before I can use it. Laser printers are delicate instruments, and I was careful. The photoconductor cartridge shouldn't be exposed to too much light, and I was unpacking it under a bright light on my waterbed (crazy I know). I'd say it takes an 11th grade education and careful re-reading to get through the setup.

The printer comes standard with a 250-sheet paper tray and 512K memory, which isn't enough for heavy graphics. With *GEOS*, you'll need at least a meg. Here's why: eight dots on the printed page add up to one byte in the printer's memory. So at 300 DPI a row of dots across an 8 inch page is 2400 dots or 800 bytes. Going down the page we have 10.5 inches of coverage. That's 3150 dots. Multiply the two and we have 7,560,000 dots (bits) or 969,500 bytes, almost a meg

of memory. I ordered the 1 meg board, but got the 2 megger (I'll be in confession for months). Since I had the 2 meg board with the printer, I had the extra step of pulling out the circuit board and popping in the memory. Naturally I was terrified through the entire process because the board was in there rather snugly, and I thought I'd break it getting it out. In retrospect it wasn't that difficult.

The step up to the laser printer is a big one, even a 300 DPI non postscript el cheapo laser printer for the masses. I expected no frills and much frustration with this low cost printer. If this is the bottom of the barrel, laser country is nice indeed. Everything is nicer, right down to the two slick, confusing manuals.

The printer doesn't seem cheap at all. It has an LCD display on the front and eight buttons that let you navigate through the menus. It even tells you when it's sick and what needs servicing. It warns you about 500 pages before the toner needs replacing. Hopefully that won't be for well over a year with me since the supplied cartridge lasts at least 5000 pages. The diagrams in the operation manual make the menus seem more complicated than they really are. This printer is very easy to use. There are no DIP switches to change. Configuration is handled through the LCD menu system. Any changes you make will survive a power outage.

The fourth page I printed jammed and I had to clear the misfeed, but after that I've printed maybe 200 pages without another jam. Printing is now carefree, and the pages come out face down and stacked in order. Print speed is 6PPM (pages per minute) and that's fast enough for me. It seems faster than that. When printing graphics, it's slower than my *Canon BJ-5 Bubble Jet* printer. Since the laser printer is a *page printer*, it doesn't start printing pages until an entire page is uploaded from the computer. For text, that's only 1000-2000 bytes of information. Full-page graphics take 1 to 3 minutes, depending on the graphic. A simple DOODLE screen dump might only take seconds, depending on the software.

You might want to include a forced page character in your *TWS* and *SpeedScript* documents. Again, this is a page printer. The printer won't print until a page is filled or fed either with a forced page from your software or the form feed button on the face of the printer. You might turn the printer off with the last page in RAM.

You're looking at bitmapped output, not the actual fonts of the printer. At 300 dpi, this is about as fine a print as you can get and still look halfway sharp. There are 14 fonts onboard, but they are dependent on the emulation mode selected.

The printer emulates five printers, a couple of them unlikely: *HP PCL 4*, *Epson FX-80*, *IBM Graphics Printer*, *IBM Proprinter* and the *Diablo 630*. All of these printers can be chosen by name from the menu. A real *HP PCL 4* can process compressed bitmaps for higher speed. I tried sending compressed data and saw garbage printed. So the emulation, at least apparently, isn't full.

The cost of replacing the toner is an unknown for me at present. The local "Lazer's Edge" store has never heard of the *JX-9400*, though they know of the 9500 and 9600. I've heard quotations of \$50-\$120 for toner replacement. This may seem expensive, but mind you a full toner cartridge will print 15,000 jet black pages. That's 30 reams of paper! The next time I change my toner may well be the last time in the life of the printer!

The manual tells me that the toner lasts for 15,000 pages, but that perhaps (it's unclear) the cartridges shipped with the printer are good for a mere 5000 pages. If I understand this correctly, I say bully to *SHARP* on that one. Why not give me the real thing?

The printer is warranted for 1 year. I like my new laser printer. I wish I had enough money for the 600 DPI jobs, but I don't. Maybe next year. I have no idea how much this printer retails for. From *J&R*, it's \$489, which is probably below wholesale. I should know because I was a dealer of *Casio* keyboards for a while, and found that *J&R* sold them for below my wholesale price. □

J&R Computer World
Department C04
59-50 Queens Midtown Expressway
Maspeth, NY 11378-9896
Orders: 1-800-221-8180
Questions: 1-718-417-3743

SORRY!

Last month I promised more programming, and a review of Rio's COMGEN genlock for the C-64. Well this newsletter filled up before I was ready! I'll be back next month with fewer promises, and that COMGEN review.

...Jeff

CMD Utilities Makes A Good Showing

The guys at *CREATIVE MICRO DESIGNS* may not like this review because it'll probably be too short. It won't cover every feature of the product in sufficient detail. After all I only have 8 pages, and more than ten programs to review.

I didn't have time to immerse myself into *CMD UTILITIES*, so I'm not sure if software was included to print out the docs, which are formatted for 80-columns and nearly fill side B of the disk. I instinctively typed @p,4,7 and typed @t to use *JiffyDOS* to print out the docs. It took about a half hour with my *Panasonic KXP-1123* printer.

CMD UTILITIES is a bag of goodies that has almost everything you need if you own a CMD drive, hard drive or *RAMLink*. *MCOPY* and *FCOPY* are enhanced, and there are many more tools for your use. There's also *BCOPY*, which backs up your mass storage devices.

Also included is *MENUETTE*, a very slick command console that navigates through your *CMD* devices and "launches" (hmmm, a part-time *MAC* user must have written these docs) your

BASIC and ML programs. *MENUETTE* is one of the few programs that use a mouse, joystick or keyboard interface. You'll find it useful if you want to act on files buried deep in partitions and subdirectories.

The docs for *MENUETTE* are 160 blocks, which is a window to the scope of the program. It's a good program to have autoboot when your system is powered up (if you have *RAMLink* or *RAMDrive*).

MCOPY is a disk copier. The M is for Mirror Copy. It copies like disks and partitions to and from each other. *MCOPY* is the program you'd use to copy disks -- most any disk if you have two types of any kind of drive. If you have an *FD*, *HD*, *RAMLink*, two 1541/71/81 drives, *MCOPY* will backup the disks with a full verify. My old version of *MCOPY* won't format a disk before it copies it. This version of *MCOPY* will format each track as it copies, minimizing the amount of time you spend on bad disks. *MCOPY* is used to copy our 3.5-inch editions of *LOADSTAR*.

CMD UTILITIES also consists of the following programs, which I don't have the space to review:

HD POWER TOOLS: Edits partition table. **CMD DIR SORT:** A

basic directory sorter. **DEDIT:** A more advanced directory editor with more features and speed (the one you'll use). **FOLLOW LINKS:** Locates and eradicates corrupt files. **REBUILD PDIR:** Emergency data reconstruction **FIND:** Locates files nested deep into hard drives. **CMD MOVE:** *GEOS* program for moving between partitions. **CMDTIME:** Auto-exec *GEOS* file that sets *GEOS* time from *CMD* clock. **CONVERT 41<>71:** Does what it says. **COMPARE:** Compares two disks or partitions sector for sector. **SUBPARTITION AID:** Helps create 1581 sub partitions on *CMD* partitions or *CMD* subpartitions on 1581 disks.

CMD UTILITIES gets a thumbs up, and is available for \$24.95 From:

Creative Micro Designs, Inc.
P.O. Box 646
East Longmeadow, MA 01028
Orders (800) 638-3263
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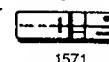
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(307) 632-1178 Information

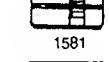
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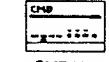


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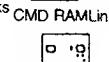
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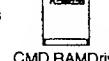
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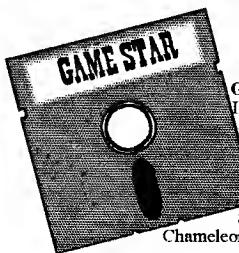
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GEOPOWER TOOLS - 19 Geos utilities: Calendar Printer, Fast Format, Geo Fetch (grab any portion of a screen as a Photo Scrap), Phoenix (resurrect a trashcanned file), Programmer's Calculator are just a few of the handy tools. Side Two is filled with Clip Art (in Photo Album format) and fonts. \$19.95 (C-64/128) Item #080525

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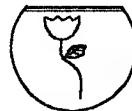
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